

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 OES-06

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8647

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PDIP, MA, US

SUBJECT: CHARGE'S COURTESY CALL ON NEW PRIME MINISTER

REF: TANANARIVE 1884

1. MY COURTESY CALL ON NEW (SINCE AUGUST) GDRM PRIME MINISTER PRODUCED NO SIGNIFICANT EXCHANGES OF VIEW NOR INSIGHTS INTO US-GDRM RELATIONS. HE WAS CORDIAL AND QUITE INTERESTED IN RESTORING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND, ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE IS VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN MADAGASCAR'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT HE WAS NOT FULLY AWARE OF MY MEETINGS WITH SOLOFOSON CONCERNING NASA. SINCE I DID NOT WANT TO JEOPARDIZE MY CHANNEL TO SOLOFOSON, I REPORTED TO HIM ON MY DISCUSSIONS WITH SOLOFOSON ONLY IN A VERY GENERAL WAY.

2. I RAISED SUBJECT OF OPEC PRICE INCREASE. PRIME MINISTER INDICATED MADAGASCAR'S UNHAPPINESS WITH PROSPECTIVE INCREASE, BUT HE DID NOT RESPOND WHEN I ASKED IF GDRM WAS MAKING SIGNIFICANT APPROACH TO OPEC COUNTRIES.

3. PRIME MINISTER APPARENTLY HAD OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND DURING OUR MEETING, SINCE HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM SEEING PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA. I ASSURED HIM THAT WE WERE SINCERELY

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INTERESTED IN IMPROVING RELATIONS AND THAT A

CLEAR, POSITIVE ATTITUDE ON PART OF GDRM LEADERS WOULD BE INSTRUMENTAL IN INSURING THAT LOWER GDRM LEADERS DO NOT TAKE IMPULSIVE ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE INIMICAL TO BETTER US-GDRM RELATIONS. AT THIS POINT, HE BRIGHTENED UP AND INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT AND THAT HE WOULD WORK TOWARDS ELIMINATING SUCH NUISANCE ACTIONS.

4. SIDE BENEFIT FROM MY COURTESY CALL WAS THAT IT WAS GENEROUSLY COVERED BY RADIO, TV, AND SOME NEWSPAPERS, ALL OF WHICH GAVE OUR MEETING UPBEAT COVERAGE. THIS MAY HAVE STEMMED FROM FACT THAT, SINCE PRIME MINISTER IS A HEARTY INDIVIDUAL, WE WERE ALL SMILES FOR NEWSPAPER PHOTOS AND TV.

5. COMMENT: IT STILL APPEARS THAT PRIME MINISTER'S ROLE IN MADAGASCAR'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS LIMITED BUT, OWING TO TO RESPECT HE HAS FROM ALMOST ALL OTHER CABINET MINISTERS, IT IS LIKELY THAT HE HAS ATTEMPTED TO IMBUE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD US-GDRM RELATIONS WITHIN THE CABINET. IT MAY BE COINCIDENTAL BUT, ASIDE FROM EXPULSIONS, A MORE FAVORABLE GDRM ATTITUDE TOWARDS IMPROVING RELATIONS STEMMED FROM THE TIME OF THE GOVERNMENT CHANGES IN AUGUST WHEN RAKOTONIAINA BECAME PRIME MINISTER.

6. IT IS ALSO BECOMING MORE CLEAR, AS WE HAD EXPECTED, THAT RAKOTONIAINA AND RATSIRAKA HAVE BEEN DRIFTING APART SINCE AUGUST AS FORMER TRIES TO GIVE SOME DIRECTION TO THE CABINET AND LATTER ATTEMPTS TO RETAIN AS MUCH POWER AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO SEE WHETHER THIS BREAK WILL HAVE PROFOUND EFFECTS ON GDRM POLICY.

SHEINBAUM

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